

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission Work Session  
Spokane, WA November 3, 2011

# Proposed State Wolf Management and Conservation Plan

Comments of Joe Peone, Program Director, Colville Tribes  
Fish & Wildlife Department

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# About the Colville Confederated Tribes

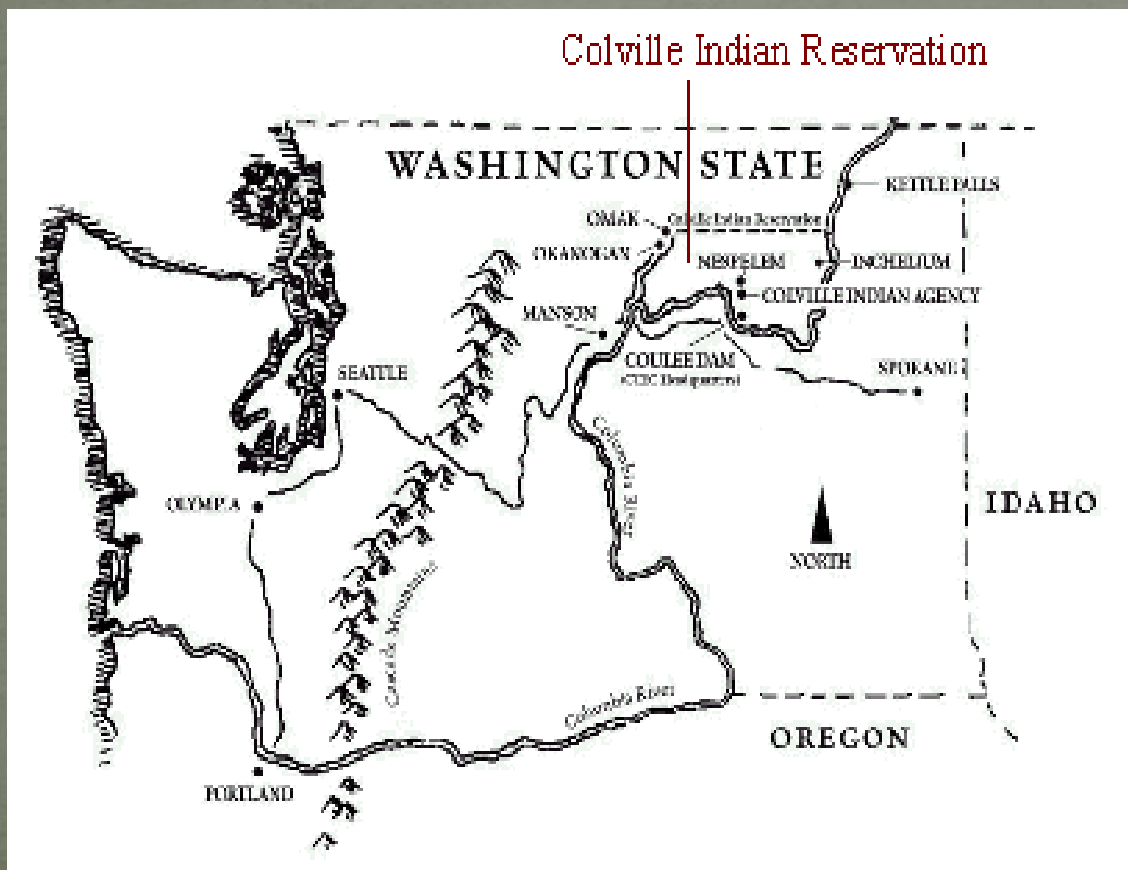
- Sovereign Nation and federally-recognized Indian Tribe
- Confederation of 12 Tribes commonly known by English and French names: the Colville, Nespelem, San Poil, Sinixt (Lakes), Palus, Wenatchi, Chelan, Entiat, Methow, southern Okanogan, Moses Columbia and Nez Perce of Chief Joseph's Bands.
- Approximately 10,000 enrolled members, roughly half of whom reside on the Colville Indian Reservation
- Membership relies on harvest of first foods, including deer, elk and moose, for ceremonial and subsistence purposes





# About the Colville Indian Reservation

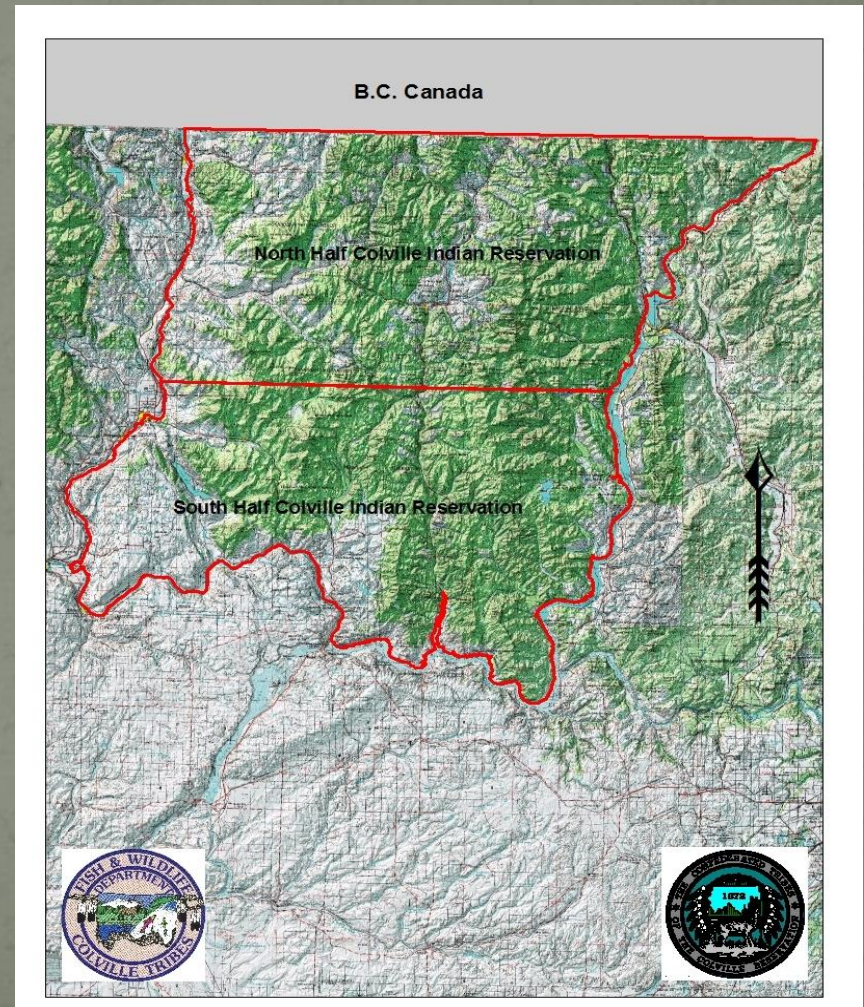
- The Colville Indian Reservation was established by Executive Order in 1872 and was originally twice as large as it is today.



- Current Reservation is approximately 1.4 million acres in size
- Located in north central Washington in the southeastern portion of Okanogan County and the southern half of Ferry County

# Reserved Hunting and Fishing Rights on the North Half

- Colville Tribes' off-Reservation reserves hunting rights include the North Half, an area bounded by the Okanogan River to the west, the Colville Reservation boundary to the south, the Columbia River/Lake Roosevelt to the east, and 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel to the north
- The Colville Tribes' reserved hunting rights were reaffirmed in the U.S. Supreme Court case *Antoine v. Washington*, 420 U.S. 194 (1975)





# Colville Tribes F&W Wolf Surveys to Date

- In the winter 2007 CCT F&W staff began conducting forest carnivore snow track surveys.
- In 2008 we documented the first large canine tracks consistent with that of a gray wolf and began deploying remote camera sets conducting gray wolf howling surveys.
- In the summer of 2011 remote cameras produced the first pictures of gray wolves on the Colville Reservation.







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# Confirming Wolf DNA on the Colville Reservation

- DNA samples collected from scat are sent to the Laboratory for Conservation and Ecological Genetics at the University of Idaho in order to determine whether the DNA is from gray wolf, wolf-dog hybrid, coyote, or dog and to determine if wolves are naturally emigrating from B.C. Canada dispersing from Idaho and Montana populations.
- In the 2010-2011 winter one DNA sample was confirmed to be from a gray wolf.





# Colville Tribes' Concerns about the Proposed Plan: Predation on Ungulates

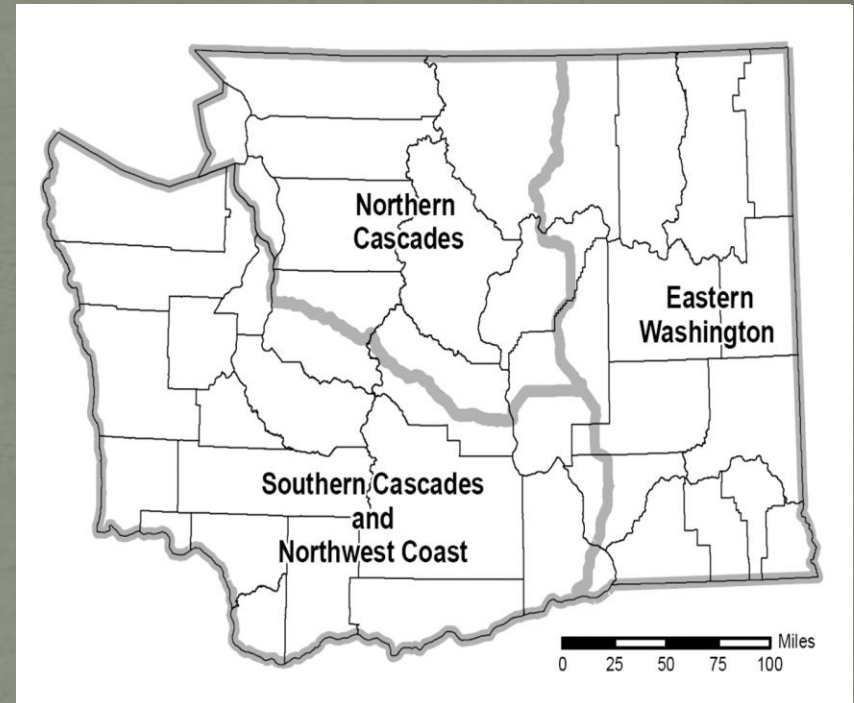
- Want to preserve a meaningful opportunity for Tribal harvest of deer, moose and elk on the Reservation and North Half
- Concerned about the Plan's proposed management of wolf-ungulate interactions only where WDFW determines that "wolf predation [is] a primary limiting factor for an 'at risk' ungulate population...before state delisting occurs." *Final Recommended Plan, Chapter 5, Section F*





# Colville Tribes' Concerns about the Proposed Plan: Downlisting/Delisting Criteria

- Concerned that successful breeding pairs must be present for 3 successful years *in each recovery region* before statewide downlisting/delisting occurs when the Plan acknowledges that “[r]ecovery is...likely to happen more quickly through the reoccupation of eastern Washington than waiting for wolves to reach far western Washington.” *Final Recommended Plan, Chapter 3, Section B*



- Want to ensure that the Colville Tribes do not bear a disproportionate burden through reduced ceremonial and subsistence harvest opportunities while waiting for statewide wolf recovery objectives to occur



# Colville Tribes' Concerns about the Proposed Plan: Translocation Process/Timeliness

Concerned that in the absence of timely natural dispersal to southwest Washington and the Olympic Peninsula from distant colonizing sources separated by human-created dispersal barriers, that under the plan WDFW would consider translocation only where:

- “[O]ne recovery region had exceeded its delisting requirements by at least one pair while another recovery region remained unoccupied.”
- After conducting a feasibility assessment, developing an implementation plan, and conducting a NEPA/SEPA public review process depending federal or state ownership of the translocation site. *Final Recommended Plan, Chapter 3 Section B*



Concerned that the subsistence resources of great ceremonial and spiritual significance to the Tribe and its members will be adversely and disproportionately impacted by wolf predation in eastern Washington before WDFW can develop the tools to achieve statewide wolf recovery goals



# Next Steps: Developing a Colville Tribal Wolf Management Plan for the Reservation and North Half

- Colville Tribes Fish & Wildlife Department is currently working on a Wolf Management Plan for the Reservation and North Half



- Our plan will utilize a balanced approach between the Tribes' wolf recovery and conservation objectives and the ceremonial and subsistence needs of the Tribe and its members
- To the extent possible we will work within the framework identified for wolf recovery identified in the state's Final Recommended Plan while meeting the Tribes' own wildlife management objectives
- We plan to work with WDFW in the coordinated implementation of our respective plans on the North Half where the Tribes' federally-recognized and protected hunting rights preempt inconsistent state law



# Maintaining our Positive Co-management Relationship

- Colville Tribe and WDFW have worked cooperatively in the past on wildlife co-management issues, including bighorn sheep reintroduction onto the Reservation
- We hope to continue this positive working relationship through coordinated implementation of the state's Final Recommended Wolf Conservation and Management Plan and the Tribes' wolf management plan





# Questions?



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